

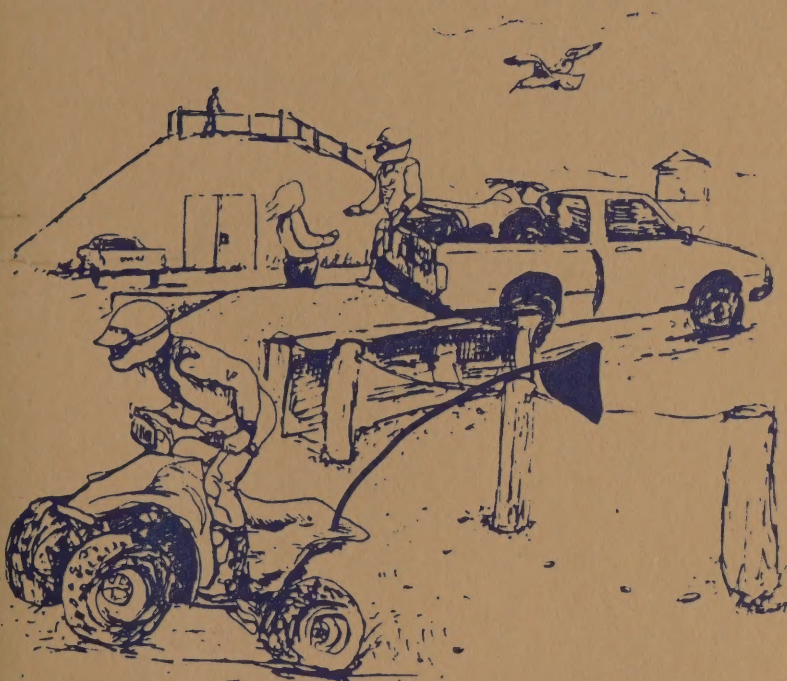
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# California

## *Samoa Dunes Recreation Area*



U. S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
1695 Heindon Road  
Arcata, California 95521-4573  
(707) 825-2300

Funded by:

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Welcome to the Samoa Dunes Recreation Area. As a visitor to this 300 acre park you may take advantage of a wide variety of recreational activities, including hiking, surfing, fishing, sightseeing, beachcombing, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, birdwatching and picnicking. Due to the vast array of activities, it is important to respect the rights of other visitors as you enjoy your time. When walking in the recreation area please be aware of OHV riding areas.

The following information will acquaint you with some of the resource values and recreational opportunities in the area. Enjoy your visit!



Note: Area is closed to nighttime vehicle use



# History

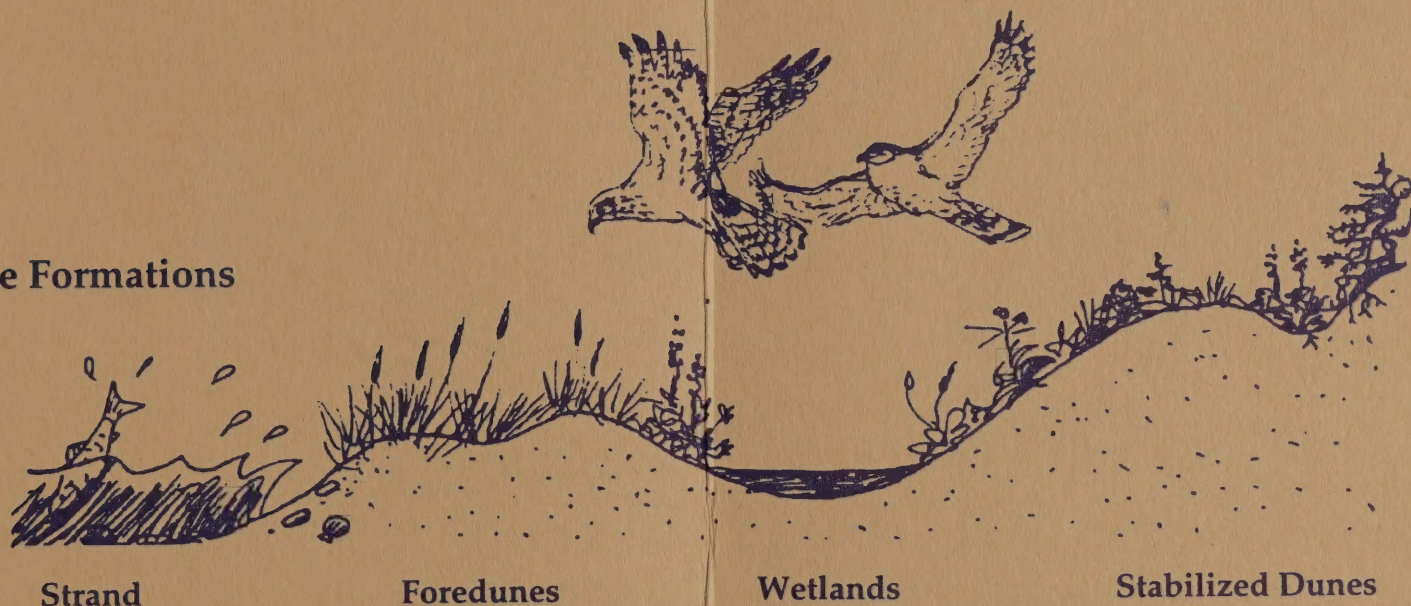
Once this area was a seasonal food gathering site for the Wiyot Indians. The Wiyot gathered shellfish and discarded the shell remains in heaps. The scattered remnants of these heaps may be seen throughout the park.

Discovered in 1809, Humboldt Bay became a popular harbor during the westward movement. In the 1850's the U.S. government erected a lighthouse near the center of what is now the Samoa Dunes Recreation Area. Releasing the beacon was too low to be seen clearly from the ocean, the lighthouse was abandoned in 1867. Remains of the lighthouse may be seen in the Wetland Protection Area.

During World War II, the Coast Guard was responsible for surveillance of the Pacific coastline. Ammunition bunkers were constructed at this time and can be seen near the OHV staging area.

Today the area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a multiple-use recreation site. Activities ranging from OHV riding to scientific study of rare plants are possible. Adjacent to this public use area is the Coast Guard's Humboldt Bay Station. Entry into their fenced compound is by permission only.

## Dune Formations



Several stages of dune formations may be seen in the Samoa Dunes Recreation Area. Closest to the ocean, where sand deposition occurs, is the strand. Dry sand from the strand is moving by wind to form foredunes. Vegetation in this area is adapted to the stresses of wind, salt spray and low soil moisture.

As wind moved down the backside of the foredunes its velocity increases, carrying sand that scours out deflation plains. Fresh water collects in these low-lying areas during the winter months, forming ponds or wetlands. Lush vegetation and water provide an invaluable food source for the abundant wildlife that concentrate here. Marsh hawks can be observed frequently as they glide in and out of the willow thickets.

Beyond the wetlands, wind velocity decreases and sand is deposited. Vegetation is established, sand continues to be deposited and the dunes grow. Native vegetation is adapted to these slow-moving, loose particle sand dunes. In the early 1900's exotic plants, such as bush lupine and ice plant, were introduced into this area to stabilize the dunes and keep them from damaging the man-made facilities constructed here.



## Rare Plant Area: Protection & Research

The northeast 40 acres of the Samoa Dunes Recreation Area has been set aside to protect and research native plants with emphasis on the endangered Humboldt Bay wallflower (*Erysimum menziesii*).

The Humboldt Bay wallflower is endemic to northern California coastal dunes. Its dune mat habitat, with sparse, low vegetation and open sandy areas, has become extremely limited. One reason for the loss of habitat is the encroachment of exotic plants. Exotics, especially bush lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*), degrade dunes, allowing other exotics to invade. Natives, such as the Humboldt Bay wallflower, are crowded out.



Currently a Humboldt State University research program is being conducted in the Rare Plant Protection Area. Objectives of the program include protecting existing Menzies' wallflowers and providing suitable habitat for the repopulation of native plants.

## Off-Highway Vehicle Use

A staging area has been developed for OHV enthusiasts. Facilities include an unloading ramp, restroom, tables, cooking grills and a scenic overlook. Group overnight camping during organized events may be allowed by permit only. From the staging area, riders have easy access to 220 acres of "open" terrain, containing numerous trails and the beach strand.

The following partial list of regulations and tips should help OHV users and other recreationists appreciate and enjoy the use of these public lands.

- The new 75-acre Eureka Dunes Riding Area is now open for OHV use and extends about one mile north of the park. The rest of the beach and dunes along the peninsula are closed to vehicle use, except by special permit from the county.
- ATV riders must wear protective helmets.
- Observe posted signs. Fenced areas mark sensitive wildlife and plant habitat, and are "closed" to vehicle use. The "open" riding areas area also posted and those on foot should be aware of their locations.
- All vehicles must be registered and a green sticker or license plate clearly displayed.
- Motorcycles must be equipped with an approved spark arrester and muffler that meets noise standards.
- Flags are required on all OHV's in this recreation area for visibility and safety.
- Consult tidetable booklet.
- Please respect private property.

